

Last weekend, I led the first Congressional delegation visit to Israel and Jordan since the start of new peace talks between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Mahmoud Abbas. The trip was part of my duties as chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations Select Intelligence Oversight Panel, and our [3-member delegation](#) met with high-level intelligence and government officials to discuss the peace process and the security of Israeli citizens.

Our meetings with Prime Minister Netanyahu and King Abdullah of Jordan were instructive. Prime Minister Netanyahu sees this as a critical time and believes that he is in a unique position to achieve a negotiated peace that will preserve the security of Israel. He says that both he and President Abbas must challenge their constituencies if the negotiations are to succeed. King Abdullah has made clear that success will require commitment from other countries in the region, and he is working arduously with several others to gain cooperation. There is no shortage of skepticism when discussing prospects for peace. Yet, the developments of the last few weeks have been encouraging. It will take courage and sacrifice to secure a just, permanent, and peaceful settlement that both guarantees Israel's security and establishes a viable Palestinian state. Having returned from the Middle East, I will do what I can do support such efforts.

Restoring Funding for Stem Cell Research

In the past few weeks, two court rulings have brought great uncertainty to federal funding of stem cell research. A [federal court ruling](#) in August struck down President Obama's 2009 executive order that expanded embryonic stem cell research, while on Thursday an [appeals court](#) issued an injunction temporarily lifting the ban until the court issues its ruling. There are more than 100 grants totaling more than \$100 million which are caught in the middle of this legal battle. Such instability makes it difficult for researchers. Scientists cannot plan for labs or companies when one week NIH says it is halting grant submissions and another week says that might not be the case. This shouldn't be. As I've [written to Congressional leaders](#), instead of putting stem cell research in the middle of a drawn out court battle, Congress can act swiftly to permanently restore funding for this cutting edge research.

Stem cell research holds promise for discovering groundbreaking treatment and even cures for millions of patients living with devastating and debilitating diseases, and I long have been a supporter of pursuing the most promising paths of stem cell research. If the U.S. does not support this, some leading researchers in the U.S. will take their research abroad to more accommodating countries, taking with them the economic growth and job creation that will come as research becomes actual therapies and treatments. In the current economy, we need to do everything we can to foster job creation, especially in innovative research businesses.

A Successful Approach to Preventing Military Suicides

Our commitment to confronting the national suicide epidemic among our veterans must be comprehensive and unwavering. To close a critical gap in suicide prevention that was exposed by the tragic death of Sgt. Coleman Bean of East Brunswick, I worked to pass [legislation in the House](#), which Senator Lautenberg introduced in the Senate. I've also passed in the House [\\$20 million in funding](#) for the VA to use direct advertising and social media to reach veterans where they are.

We also must support effective programs. Recently, Senator Lautenberg and I [visited](#) one such program,

[UMDNJ's Vet2Vet peer-to-peer counseling and suicide prevention program](#)

. For five years, Vet2Vet has provided comprehensive, in-person support for soldiers going into combat, veterans, and their families. The program provides training for service members before they deploy and after they return. NJ Vet2Vet also provides a 24-hour-a-day, peer-operated hotline. This program should serve as a national model for suicide prevention. No New Jersey Guard member has fallen victim to suicide since the Vet2Vet program went live in 2005. Not wanting to wait for the legislation to create a national counseling program, Vet2Vet also hopes to apply to New Jersey the program created by my bill.

Because of the serious nature of this problem, you may want to pass along to friends, families, and coworkers the contact info for the Vet2Vet hotline: 1-866-VETS-NJ-4 - that's 1-866-838-7654.